2: Lettner L-8 (1868-69) 1867 AVS Dard AVS

251 their houses, and of which they alone have any knowledge. The Maharajah's troops when invading Gilgit often suffered severely from want of food when, unknown to them, large stores of grain of every kind, butter, ghi, etc., were buried close to them. The Gilgitis and other so-called rebels, generally, were well off, knowing where to go for food. Even in subject Astor it is the custom to lay up [584] provisions in this manner. On the day of birth of anyone in that country it is the custom to bury a stock of provisions which are opened on the day of betrothal of the [262] young man and distributed. The ghi, which by that time turns frightfully sour, and [to our taste] unpalatable and the colour of which is red, is esteemed a great delicacy and is said to bring much luck.

• 186 The chalk used for cementing the stones is called "Son Bàtt." Grapes are called "Djatah," and are said, together with wine, to have been the principal food of Ghazandar, the Rajah of Hunza, of whom it is reported that when he heard of the arrival of the first European in Astor (probably Vigne) he fled to a fort called Gojal and shut himself up in it with his flocks, family and retainers. He had been told that the European was a great sorcerer, who carried an army with him in his trunks and who had serpents at his command that stretched themselves over any river in his way to afford him a passage. I found this reputation of European sorcery of great use, and the wild mountaineers looked with respect and awe on a little box which I carried with me, and which contained some pictures of clowns and soldiers belonging to a small magic lantern.

273 The Gilgitis consider the use of wine as unlawful; probably it is not very long since they have become so religious and drink it with remorse. My Gilgitis told me that the Mughulli—a sect living in Hunza, Gojal, Yassen and Punyal*—considered the use of wine with prayers to be rather meritorious than otherwise. A Drunkard is called "Máto."

* These are the strange sect of the Mulàis about whom more in my "Handbook of Hunza, Nagyr and a part of Yasin."

Note.—The Kirghis are described by the Chilisis as having flat faces and small noses and are supposed to be very white and beautiful, to be Nomads and to feed on milk, butter and mutton.

The Chilisis call the people between Hunza and the Pamirs [our Pamir] on the Yarkand road = Gojáli.

There are also other Gojális under a Raja of Gojál on the Badakhshán road.

The Chilisis call the Siah Pósh Kafirs = Bashgali (Bashgal is the name of the country inhabited by this people who enjoy the very worst reputation for cruelty). They are supposed to kill every traveller that comes within their reach and to cut his nose or ear off as a trophy.*

The Chilisis were originally four tribes; viz.:

The Bagrot of Bunar.
The Kané of Takh.
The Doné of the Chilis fort.
The Manzhaké of the Manzhaki fort.

The Doné and the Manzhaké fought. The latter were defeated, and are said to have fled into Astor and Little Tibet territory.

A Foreigner is called "dsho."

Fellow-countrymen are called "maiábi."

The stature of the Dards is generally slender and wiry and well suited to the life of a mountaineer. They are now gradually adopting Indian clothes, and whilst this will displace their own rather picturesque dress and strong, though rough, indigenous manufacture, it may also render them less manly. They are fairer than the people of the plains (the women of Yasin being particularly beautiful and almost reminding one of European women), but on the frontier they are rather mixed—the Chilisis with the

* The two Kafirs in my service in 1866, one of whom was a Bashgali, seemed inoffensive young men. They admitted drinking a portion of the blood of a killed enemy or eating a bit of his heart, but I fancy this practice proceeds more from bravado than appetite. In "Davies' Trade Report" I find the following Note to Appendix XXX., page CCCLXII. "The ruler of Chitrál is in the habit of enslaving all persons from the tribes of Kalásh, Dangini and Bashgali, idolaters living in the Chitrál territory."

Indus being impracticable for horses. There are no forts in Kandia.

Up to this point in the Kohistan, the people along the right bank of the river—that is to say, those of Dunher, Dusbeyn, Pattan, Seo, and Kandia—speak a separate language and call themselves Maiyon. The Afghans apply the name of Mair to them. Very little is known of these people, who are the poorest of all the Kohistan communities. They combine against all others, and refuse to intermarry with any but their own people and those of Pattan and Yah, who have, of late years only, begun to intermarry with the inhabitants of Koli and Palas. They apply the name of Dard to the people living on the left bank of the river. This is the only use of this term found among all the tribes to which it has been applied. Above Kandia, on both banks of the river, and in the lateral valleys up to and beyond Bunji, Shina[1] is the only language spoken.

Following up the course of the river, on the left bank, the small communities of Sazin and Harband are reached. They can respectively furnish about 400 and 500 fighting men. Between the two is the small valley of Shatial, which belongs to Sazin. The people of Sazin keep themselves apart from all others and refuse to intermarry. They have the reputation of being warlike and brave.

Immediately opposite Sazin, on the right bank, is the fertile valley of Tangir. The people, like those of Sazin and Harband, are Shina intermixed with Yeshkuns and Kremmins. They are looked upon as the rightful owners of the soil, but the fertility and abundance of the land has attracted Afghans from Swat of the Mandi Khel, Akhound Khel, and Khuddoo Khel, and Syuds, who have begun to settle in the valley. Of late years, too, the overflow from the redundant populations of Koli and Palas has found its way into Tangir, so that now the immigrants outnumber the rightful owners of the soil. A bad feeling also exists between Tangir and Sazin on the same account. The valley can muster about 1,200 fighting men, of whom only one-third are furnished by the three villages of Kami, Shekho, and Diemar, the only villages in which none of the recent immigrants are found. The principal village in the valley is Kami (fort), 250 houses; after this, the fortified villages of Jaglot, Loork, and Diemar. From the head of the valley, which is thickly covered with pine forest, two roads lead into the Yassin territory, besides the

[1] This I have not yet succeeded in obtaining.

[2] See Appendix B.

Great enmity exists between the people of Ponyal and those of Yassin and Chitral.

The principal place in Ponyal is Chut,* which has been corrupted into Sher by the Dogras. The people are, with few exceptions, Yudhkas or Bursuts, but the language spoken is Shina. In religion they are mostly Moslems, a few Soonnees and Shiahs only being found amongst them. Ponyal contains about 2,000 inhabitants; the men are remarkable for their athletic figures. The soil, where cultivable at all, is fertile and yields two harvests in the year, but between the different patches of cultivation long stretches of sandy plain intervene, while at certain places the rocks close in on the river, which, for more than half the year, is an impassable torrent, so that the passage can be easily held by a few against superior numbers. In unsettled times guards are posted at these places to give the alarm by beacon fires.

At the western extremity of Ponyal is the fort and village of Gultkuch, which is the residence of the Ras Allut Khan, a member of the Burrowdil family who owe allegiance to Cashmere and receive a yearly subsidy in consideration of his holding this frontier post. Gultkuch is a place of some importance, as it commands the mouth of the Karoomber Valley as well as upper part of the main valley.

Opposite Gultkuch, the Karoomber Valley and river, running almost due south from the Hindoo Koosh, joins the main valley. Mr. Drew has described how this valley has during the last twenty years alternately belonged to Yassin and Gilgit. Nothing but extreme timidity or apathy can have induced the Cashmere Durbar to abandon it, as mentioned by Mr. Drew, for it is outside the natural boundary of Yassin, and could not have remained a portion of Yassin territory had the slightest disposition been evinced to retain it by the Dogras. For 25 miles the valley is broad and open, beyond that it contracts, and a road branches off past the village of Ishkaman or Ishkoman to the foot of the Darkot Pass. Continuing up the valley, which bends to the eastward, the Hindoo Koosh is crossed into the Oxus Valley by the Ishkoman Pass at a height of 12,000 feet. Formerly this road was a favourite one, but owing to recent physical changes it has now fallen into disuse.

The Karoomber Valley, which contains the ruins of several large villages, now supports only 300 souls. The former inhabitants are said to have been exposed to constant forays

* Meaning "an impregnable rock."

Though their traditions as a separate race have long passed away, the Shins still look on themselves as the aristocracy of the country, and claim to be of a more honourable caste than others, without being able to show any foundation for this claim. A Shin considers it a disgrace to have to carry a load, and regards hunting and agriculture as the only honourable pursuits for a man. They are strictly confined to the Indus Valley and its affluents.

The Shins who are found in Baltistan do not, however, arrogate to themselves any superiority over their Tartar neighbours. On the contrary, the position they occupy towards the Tartars is similar to that of the Yeshkuns in Gilgit towards themselves. They are called by the Tartars, contemptuously, "Brokpas," or highlanders, from their cultivating the highest—that is, the least fertile—ground. The Baltis habitually mention this fact when speaking of the Brokpas or Dards of the Iskardo district, but do not try to account for it.

This, together with the difference of estimation in which the Shins are held in Gilgit and Iskardo, gives a valuable clue to changes which have taken place among the different races. It is evident that in Baltistan the Tartars, and not the Brokpas, are the last-comers.

As already mentioned, the part of the Indus Valley from below Gor to the Afghan limits near Ghorband is called Shinkari, and it is in the lower part of this that the purest Shin community is now probably to be found; but the name of Shinkari, which still exists in Pukli, where the population is now entirely Afghan, perhaps indicates that the original home of the Shins was in that valley.

The most remarkable peculiarity of the Shins is their feeling with regard to the cow, to which Mr. Drew has already directed attention. In spite of their conversion to Mahommedanism, the feeling is still maintained in Nagar, Gilgit, Astor, and the Indus Valley above Bunji. In the Indus Valley below Astor the feeling has died out, but in the places mentioned, orthodox Shins will not eat beef, drink cow's milk, or touch a vessel containing it. A sucking calf, or any portion of a dead animal, is especially unclean, so that purification is necessary if even the garments should chance to touch them. It is not uncommon for a Shin to make over his cow and calf to a Yeshkun neighbour, to be restored to him when the calf is weaned. Shins also regard the domestic fowl as unclean, and in districts chiefly inhabited

character of the ordinary Cashmeri, has suffered little by comingling. Some are said to have penetrated into Chitral, where they have since become merged in the aborigine population. Those in Gilgit are weavers and carpenters, and are regarded with some contempt both by Shins and Yashkuns.

Their distinctive castes are Mons, Sheikh, Peiju, Lon, Sonjar (goldsmiths), Dar, Rawai, Bot, and Tatchan (carpenters); all of which castes are also found in Cashmere. They are all tillers of the soil, and the trades at which they work occasionally, such as weaving, are irrespective of caste, with the exception of the goldsmiths and carpenters. They intermarry without restriction among themselves, except the Tatchan, who give daughters to the other castes, but do not receive from them in return. They occasionally give daughters to Shins and Yashkuns without reciprocity. With the Kamoshis and Doms they do not marry at all. In spite of the small estimation in which they are held, they form the most thriving and energetic part of the population, while at the same time they have lost some of the worst characteristics of true Cashmeris.

In the valleys south of Gilgit, the Goojurs pasture their cattle on the high lands, not mixing with the people of the country in any way. In Tangir and Darel they are found in great numbers, and they count their herds by thousands. They attach themselves to no locality, though perhaps for a generation the same men frequent one pasture-ground, building rude huts and making a poor pretence at cultivating small patches of ground; but a very small excuse seems to be sufficient to drive them, with their herds, in search of fresh pastures. A great number inhabit the upper part of the Dir and Swat Valleys, and a few have found their way into the Gilgit Valley. They all speak the dialect of Punjabi, peculiar to their caste. Like the Syuds, they must rank as a class rather than as a caste.

Vigne, speaking of the existence of caste in Baltistan, remarks that it may perhaps be considered as a proof of the Hindoo origin of the natives of that country. Though the Baltis have undoubtedly a considerable amount of Aryan blood in their veins, they must be classed as a Mongolian race; but the existence of a caste system among them, which will be mentioned further on, must be ascribed to Dard, or more particularly to Shin, influence; for it is to be noted that the caste distinctions above mentioned are only found in

They must have been quite a brave people at one time and they still love to recount the deeds done by their forbears; in fact Dr. Francke says there are certain times when they like to forget that they are Ladakis, only remembering their Dardish descent. At such times they tell how siege was laid to one of their castles, food ran out, and it became a question of surrendering to the enemy or dying. Like brave men they decided on the latter. They all gathered in the large hall, and the oldest man was given the privilege of pushing away the stone on which stood the main pillar which supported the roof. Thus these courageous men passed into the Walhalla of the Dards. Or they tell how a Ladaki king wished to make his Dardish subjects do their share of forced labour, to which they objected. They therefore chose one of their old men to inform the king, that they never would be slaves, not even of a king. The old man received the reply that he himself would be the first who would be forced to work, but as he absolutely refused, they honoured him. However his fellow countrymen were equally obstinate, so no forced labour could be extracted from any of them.

Now we meet our first representative of this race, who has come to welcome us from the village of Hanu. How quaint his greeting is! He takes off his hat and twirls it round one of his fingers, reminding us rather of an English hip-hip-hurrah. Of course his hat differs from any hat worn by anybody else in Ladak, where the hat is of great diagnostic value. It is not unlike the hat of the Ladaki, but the part which is turned up is not lined with lambskin, and is continuous all the way round. Those worn by the ladies are different again, the upper half being turned over somewhat like a billycock hat; the side turned over and uppermost is usually a veritable needle-case with rows of needles stuck into it. We asked them why they carried all these in their hats, to which they replied that each needle had been given by and represented a friend. The popular Brogpa woman should therefore not

The people of Astor and Gilgit are
supposed if they were told that they were Dards living in
Dardistán, and their neighbours of Hunza-Nagar and Yasin
would be equally astonished. If consulted, they would pro-
bably describe their country as Shináki, or the land of the
Shins, whose Shiná is the spoken language. They are an
Aryan people, sturdy built, cheery, honest, frugal, and robust.
They are devoted to polo, and are fond of dancing. The
inhabitants of Astor wear a peculiar head-dress: a bag of
woollen cloth, half a yard long, which is rolled up outwards at
the edges until it gets to the size to fit comfortably to the head,
round which the roll makes a protection from cold or from
sun, nearly as good as a turban. Their houses are small, with
very small doors, and are usually built out from the mountain
side. Warmth is the one consideration. The Astoris have
some very peculiar customs. Drew notices that they hold the
cow in abhorrence. They will not drink cow's milk, nor will
they have cow-dung, the universal fuel of the East, and in a pure
Shin village no one will eat fowls or touch them. They
practise inoculation for small-pox, their one epidemic. The
people of Astor are Mussalmán, nevertheless being of the Sunni
persuasion, and the rest being either Shiahs or Maulais.
There is no religious intolerance in Astor.

Drew mentions the following caste divisions: Rorus, Shins,
Yashkuns, Koosins, and Doms. As regards the Rorus caste,
he says that there are a small number of families in Gilgit.
Biddulph, in his *Tribes of the Hindu Kush*, states that it forms
6 per cent. of the Gilgit population, and that it is the most
honoured caste of all, ranking next to Mukhpuns or the Rájá
caste of Dardistán. The majority of the Astoris belong to the
Yashkun caste, and the Shins are few in number, under 3,000.
They are more numerous in Gilgit, the total number of Shins,
according to the Census, being 1,735. The Shins are regarded
with great respect by the Yashkuns and the other castes. The
Yashkuns claim the Shins as their forefathers. The Shins
give their daughters to Rorus and to Saiyids, but take wives
from the Yashkuns. Far away in Central Ladákh, in the
Shara valley, live other Dards of the Buddhist religion. They
have retained the Aryan type of the country whence they
came and its Shiná dialect, but they wear the pigtail and the
Ladákhi cap. It is said that, though Buddhist by name, they
really worship local spirits and demons. They practise poly-
andry, but they will not eat with Tibetan Buddhists, and, like
the Shins in Dardistán, they hold the cow in abhorrence.

In Gilgit, as in Astor, there are few social subdivisions, for

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may have imbibed some knowledge of the power of the Indian Empire from men who had travelled, but that could not quite explain the difference. His appreciation of the value and power of outside states seemed to me to be almost intuitive. He had never read a book; he read men instead. He was a born diplomat, courteous, polished, and piquant, a man who could make up his mind rapidly and act decisively, and to a winning charm of manner he added a great personal reputation for courage. He longed to have an opportunity of avenging his old master's death, and of repaying the indignities he had been put to, on the heads of Sadiks Ali Khan and his own murderous brother Dada.

Nizam-ul-Mulk came to dinner with me one night accompanied by a Kashmiri officer. Nizam regretted the absence of champagne, but I was adamant: it would never have done to have had beer in Chitral a repetition of the former scene. It was curious to see how easily these native gentlemen, who had never dined in the European fashion, adapted themselves to their new surroundings. Nizam's sole lapse from the customary manners of the dinner table was when he blew his nose on his table napkin. Otherwise the dinner was a complete success, and my cook, the best camp cook I ever had, surpassed himself. Nizam's enjoyment of foreign cookery surprised me, but everything appealed to him from a *hors d'œuvre* of anchovy to the final strawberry ice.

At last, after many days of anxious waiting, came a letter from Umra Khan, the upshot of which was that, unless I could make definite terms with him on the part of Government, there was no use in my